

Did CIA and Nixon Know Of Plot to Ruin Onassis?

From News Services

CHICAGO — Then-Vice President President Richard M. Nixon, now-Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, and one-time Howard Hughes aide Robert A. Maheu aided a 1954 plot to ruin the late Aristotle Onassis, according to the September issue of Playboy magazine.

The magazine said the plot was initiated by Onassis' rival and in-law Stavros Niarchos and was known to the CIA, the FBI and other government agencies.

The effort against Onassis was initiated after the Greek shipping tycoon received permission from the late King Ibn Saud to carry Saudi Arabian oil in his ships.

The article by Jim Houghan excerpted from a forthcoming book, "Spooks," contends that the Jidda Agreement between King Saud and Onassis broke the monopoly control of Saudi oil shipment by the Arabian-American Oil Co., angering many American oil company executives as well as Niarchos.

Quoting extensively from financial journalist John Gerrity, who said he was in on the plot, Houghan says Niarchos, the CIA, the FBI and various government officials began a

calculated "dirty tricks" campaign against Onassis.

Houghan said the campaign involved wiretapping Onassis' New York headquarters, shadowing his top employees and spreading anti-Onassis smears throughout the world press by means of government leaks and bribed journalists.

Houghan said the campaign even involved the bombing and strafing of one of Onassis' whaling ships by a Peruvian fighter plane.

In the article, Houghan quotes Gerrity as saying he and Maheu, whom Gerrity believed was a CIA agent, were recruited for the campaign at a meeting in Nixon's office early in 1954, when Nixon was vice president.

He also said Gerrity met with Burger, then an assistant attorney general in the Justice Department, who said he would take "judicial oversight" of any activities Gerrity and Maheu might indulge in against Onassis.

Burger denied through a spokesman that he received intelligence reports on the anti-Onassis campaign.

Nixon could not be reached for comment and the CIA refused comment.

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